

Question for the Tisbury and West Tisbury Planning Boards: What are the problems in the Red Coat Hill Road area that the Planning Boards might help resolve?

West Tisbury and Tisbury town concerns for the Red Coat Hill Road area stem from a letter to the WT Planning Board from Lesley Eaton in February this year. She reported deterioration of the Special Way, Red Coat Hill Road, near her house. Site visits, talks with people living in the area, and research regarding road history and road access, showed the following problems.

- Large size of construction vehicles, and
- Over-use of the western end of Red Coat Hill Road due to limited access to the area.

After several months of discussion and research, I suggest the following issues the Planning Boards might be able to help with:

- Limit the size of construction vehicles where possible. Many construction functions could be achieved with smaller trucks. This change might be achieved:

By revising the Special Ways regulations, and/or

By the Planning Boards requiring smaller trucks for construction along a Special Way., when this is possible.

- Help open access to area. Since access roads have been blocked at Deer Hill Road (and at State Road at Zeitz's), Red Coat Hill Way, and Shubael Weeks Road (WT) and Path (Tisbury), all residents of the Red Coat Hill Road area must use the western end of Red Coat Hill Road and Chase Road to go in and out. With the understanding that more than one access takes the stress off any one section of the road, the Planning Boards could work on increasing access in the following ways:
 - Altho Carly Simon's gate was grandfathered in the Tisbury Special Ways regulations, consider removing this permission and require that the gate remain open.

- Reopening access by way of long-used Red Coat Hill Way from State Road to Red Coat Hill Road is challenging because of the numerous ways this has been blocked legally and physically. Can the Planning Boards help with this?
- Could the Planning Boards require that property owners in any one town have access in the same town? This would affect the many Tisbury owners who must now access their property in West Tisbury, and the many WT owners who now use a Tisbury access (John Hoft Road and Shubael Weeks Path.)

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Lastly, the fire chiefs in both Tisbury and WT have requested property owners make sure their access roads enable passage by emergency vehicles. Greg Leland has talked of reporting property owners to their insurance companies, possibly causing cancellation of insurance. This is clearly a towns issue. The towns' Special Ways regulations require no widening of the roads; the Fire Depts require widening. Meeting to resolve this for affected property owners is important.

A way these problems might be prevented is a Byways Committee/Planning Boards policy that no narrow roads used by vehicles be pursued for Special Way status In the future.

At the public hearing it will be important to listen to the concerns of any residents who wish to speak. The Planning Boards should not be distracted by what they cannot do - nor should they imply to speakers at the hearing that they can assist with all their concerns.

December 8, 2022

